DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 350 267 SP 034 029

AUTHOR Reiff, Judith C.; Cannella, Gaile S.
TITLE Preparing Teachers for Cultural Diversity: Rhetoric or Reality.
PUB DATE 92
NOTE 13p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association of Teacher Educators (72nd, Orlando, FL, February 15-19, 1992).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Educational Environment; *Educational Philosophy; Elementary Secondary Education; Higher Education; Intercultural Communication; *Multicultural Education; Politics of Education; *Preservice Teacher Education; *Teacher Attitudes; Teacher Education Curriculum; Teacher Student Relationship

ABSTRACT

Teacher educators must consider two major issues in their efforts to incorporate multicultural education into preservice teacher preparation programs: (1) the background and previous experiences of preservice teachers; and (2) schooling as an institution that either inhibits or promotes the strengths of citizens in a democratic society. In both schools and colleges, few role models exist for racial- or language-minority students. In addition, the curriculums at all educational levels tend to be strongly monocultural, reflecting little ethnic or cultural diversity. Recent philosophical and theoretical perspectives in education have provided insights into alternatives for multicultural teacher education. Constructivist orientations would lead programs to create experiences in which diverse realities are explored. Developmental psychology perspectives would cause teacher education to be based on the recognition that an individual's cognitive development cannot be separated from the surrounding social context. The reconstructionist perspective focuses on the conditions of schooling within a democracy. Preservice teachers must construct understandings of the effect of values on reality, the dominant forces in society, the political and economic context in which decisions are made, and the impact of culture on the individual. The teacher education program must be grounded in these issues which are philosophical, social, political, economic, and psychological. (Contains 41 references.) (IAH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED350267

Preparing Teachers for Cultural Diversity:

Rhetoric or Reality

Judith C. Reiff
The University of Georgia
Department of Elementary Education
427 Aderhold Hall
Athens, GA 30602
(404)542-4244

Gaile S. Cannella
Texas A&M University
Department of Educational Curriculum & Instruction
Rm. 107D Harrington Tower
College Station, TX 77843
(409)845-8253

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Presented to the Association of Teacher Educators, February 1992, Orlando, FL

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Judith C. Reiff

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

SO 23 4029

Preparing Teachers for Cultural Diversity:

Rhetoric or Reality

Our democratic society was established on principles that value and respect individual differences. Democratic notions support concepts of educational equity for every student. In support of democratic educational principles, professional associations stress the importance of multicultural education for teachers. The Association of Teacher Educators has continually emphasized the need for a multicultural approach in working with teachers and children. In addition, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) uses multicultural education as a specific criteria for evaluating teacher preparation programs. Yet, observation and analysis of children within classrooms and the impact of schooling on their lives does not lead one to believe that educational equity is either understood or accomplished. This emphasis on multicultural education may actually be more talk than action. What seems to be accepted practice may be more rhetoric than reality. The purposes of this paper are (1) to describe critical issues regarding cultural diversity and education, and (2) to recommend reasonable alternatives for teacher preparation.

NCATE standards define multicultural education as "Preparation for the social, political, and economic realities that individuals experience in culturally diverse and complex human encounters" (Banks, 1981, p. 195). However, even with an "emphasis" on multicultural education, traditional teacher education programs are not preparing future teachers to deal with the complexity of differences in the classroom (Larke, Wiseman, & Bradley, 1990; Mitchell, 1987). The Association of Teacher Educators conducted a survey of critical issues in teacher education. Respondents indicated that "preparing teachers for multiethnic, multicultural settings" was one of the three most critical issues. The report also suggested that preservice teachers are not being prepared for such settings in preparation programs (Buttery, Haberman, & Houston, 1990).

To provide successful multicultural education, we must clearly define the social, political and economic realities related to schooling and consequently to teacher preparation. Two major concerns for teacher educators are (1) the background and previous experiences of those who enter teacher education programs, and (2) schooling as an institution that either promotes or inhibits the strengths of citizens in a democratic society.

Cultural Diversity and Education

Practicing teachers express concern about not being prepared to work in multicultural settings. Cultural differences are threatening and intercultural communications are awkward to those who have not had diverse experiences. Teachers most often come from isolated ethnic groups, with professional preparation that does not generally include much direct interaction with different cultures (Banks, 1981, 1991; Gollnick & Chinn, 1986).

Preservice Teacher Profile

Eighty-one percent of prospective teachers are female (near 90% if in elementary education); 92% are white; less than 3% know a language other than English; and only 9% report that they would choose to teach in urban or multicultural settings (21st century, 1991). The number of minorities entering colleges and universities is decreasing with fewer minorities entering teaching (Hadaway, et. al., 1988). Currently only 4% of teachers come from culturally different populations.

Interestingly, the primary justification given by those who do not enter the profession is the salary (Blacks, 74%; Whites, 44%). The second reason is concern for discipline (Whites, 23%; Blacks 52%). The reasons given for leaving the profession continue to be dominated by salary and discipline (Dilworth, 1990, p 32). See Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here.

Parents' education, type of high school, and family income all influence the profile of college students. Blacks, American Indians, and Hispanics are at high risk of failing based on these criteria. The percentages or number of bachelor's degrees conferred in education in 1985 were 88.3% for Whites, 6.2% for Blacks, 2.9% for Hispanics, 482 American Indians, and 770 Asians (Dilworth, 1990). Later, many of the Blacks and Hispanics with degrees were found to be employed in noncertified and noninstructional jobs. Obviously, few minority role models are available for minority children compounded by few minority faculty preparing teachers. From elementary classrooms through higher education, we are not responsive to culturally diverse students (Brown, 1988).

In most classrooms, predominantly white preservice teachers experience culture shock. Mock (1981) refers to "culture shock" for a child when the individual feels trapped between two sets of values and beliefs. The individual feels powerless, helpless, and isolated. Teachers (preservice or inservice) can experience this same discrepancy. They may view children through their own "cultural prism" (Bowman, 1989), resulting in feelings of alienation for both the teacher and the pupils in the class.

Reiff and Cannella (1991) administered a survey to preservice early childhood teachers concerning feelings of confidence for working with and understanding different multicultural groups. Response means indicated moderate to strong feelings of confidence. The college students felt least confident about child rearing practices and familiarity with the history of minority groups. Although students expressed feelings of confidence for teaching in multicultural settings, they exhibited concern for teaching in inner-city schools. Future teachers have obvious confusion related to diversity and school settings. Limited experiences with cultural diversity virtually guarantees classroom culture shock.

Institutionalized Schooling

Boyer (1981) has illustrated that from primary schools through higher education, the "chosen" curriculum does not reflect ethnic and cultural diversity. At least 85% of the curriculum is macrocultural or European-based with the major focus on Western civilization (Banks, 1991; Garcia, 1982; King, 1980). Yet, by the year 2000, children from ethnically different backgrounds will be more than 40% of the public school population.

As a social institution, schooling is of course vulnerable to competing forces. This can be a positive phenomena, providing opportunities to develop awareness culturally and politically (Apple, 1982; Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985). However, Bowles and Gintis (1977) have suggested that just the opposite is occurring. Schools may prevent upward mobility and citizen empowerment for most of the population served by them.

Monocultural curriculum simply perpetuates the provincial thinking of our teacher education students. Preservice teachers (and practicing teachers) are not aware that traditional content and methods may provide messages to their students that are attacks on individual and cultural values, create negative feelings, and limit beliefs concerning individual opportunities and alternatives.

A goal of multicultural teacher education should be to not only increase cultural sensitivity but to help preservice teachers learn to create educational objectives and environments that facilitate and empower rather than repress and discriminate (Liston & Zeichner, 1990). "Diversity must become a strength upon which our nation's future can depend" rather than seen as a weakness in our society (Howe, 1991, p. 202).

Alternatives for Teacher Preparation

Scholars such as Banks (1981; 1991) have focused on the importance of cross-cultural interactions and community involvement. In 1981, he described four levels of cultural acceptance. Level I consists mostly of superficial and brief encounters such as speaking to a Chinese neighbor or eating at a Mexican restaurant. At this level tourism or books are interpreted as bizarre, unbelievable or exotic. Too often these are the only type of experiences provided for preservice teachers.

At Level II, an individual begins to experience more meaningful communications with members of other groups. They start to assimilate some symbols and characteristics of the ethnic group -- communication styles, symbols, values, etc. This level incorporates an awareness of significant culture traits that contrast with personal culture. Conflict between cultures may be perceived as unbelievable, frustrating, and even irritating. Level III is obtained when an individual is thoroughly bicultural. The person is as comfortable with the adopted culture as with the primary culture -- both are equally meaningful. This level involves intellectual analysis that allows the culture to be perceived

as cognitively believable. Level IV is the complete assimilation or "re-socialization" into the new culture. This level allows a person to understand feelings from the standpoint of an insider. The culture becomes believable due to subject familiarity and cultural immersion (living the culture).

As a complement to the focus on cross-cultural interactions and community involvement, recent philosophical and theoretical perspectives have provided insights into alternatives for multicultural teacher education. These perspectives include constructivist philosophical orientations, sociocognitive developmental psychology, and reconstructionist teacher education.

Constructivist Philosophy

A philosophical paradigm has emerged that contradicts reductionist approaches that have dominated the educational community, as well as other political, economic and social structures (Poplin, 1988). This paradigm is referred to as constructivism and asserts that realities are constructions of the human mind. Knowledge (or reality) is viewed as subjective, constructed by human beings to best fit their perception of a particular situation. Knowledge is subject to continual revision and reconstruction. This perspective has been applied to both the philosophical discussion of reality (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Guba, 1990) and the resultant nature of learning for human beings (Kamii, 1985; Fosnot, 1989).

Constructivists view reality (especially social reality) as created by human beings rather than existing independently. This reality construction leads to the conclusion that for people, multiple realities are created dependent on the individual and the social context (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Values are constructed and impact further constructions. The existence of multiple realities inevitably leads to divergence. Controlled outcomes are unlikely.

Constructivist approaches to learning have led to descriptions of human beings as active, creators of concepts and understandings. The brain's natural function is to continually learn. Although all experiences impact the individual, learning cannot be controlled by others. Individuals are seen as questioners, explorers, problem solvers and concept creators.

When reality is seen as subjective and created by individuals, issues related to cultural diversity and teacher education easily emerge:

(1) If multiple realities exist for individuals and groups, unidirectional curriculum and prespecified outcomes would appear inappropriate for multicultural teacher education.

(2) Based on the concept of learners as constructors of their own realities, preservice teachers (as well as the pupils who will be in their classrooms) need experiences that facilitate exploration and action.

Constructivist orientations would lead teacher education programs to create experiences in which diverse realities are explored.

Developmental Psychology

Closely tied to constructivist perspectives, developmental psychologists have stressed that the cognitive or intellectual development of an individual cannot be separated from the social context surrounding the person (Rogoff, 1990). Not only does individual growth and development take place with social support, but the tools of thought historically developed by the culture mediate individual activity (Vygotsky, 1978). Concepts of higher order thinking are actually derived from the values and historical context of the culture (Wertsch, 1985).

This mind "in society" perspective continues to support notions that describe human beings as intrinsically motivated, active learners, but also focuses on humans as social organisms (Als, 1979). Learners actively try to "make sense" of the sociocognitive context in which they find themselves. Rather than furthering the hypothesis that all human beings possess general cognitive skills, the sociocognitive perspective proposes that cognition is channeled by sociocultural factors (Olson, 1976). The values and context of different cultures or historical periods result in the construction of differing cognitive processes (Rogoff, 1990).

Each individual is born into a society that because of circumstances has chosen particular values and systems for supporting those values. The systems within a culture serve to impact the cognitive structures created by the individuals within the culture. For example, Scribner and Cole (1981) have proposed that different forms of literacy (practiced by different cultures) result in the creation of different types of cognitive strength in different cultures.

When development or learning are seen as inseparable from the sociocultural context, issues related to cultural diversity and teacher preparation become obvious:

(1) Preservice teachers enter educational programs using and valuing particular cognitive processes that have been mediated by their own culture.
(2) Pupils in classrooms (from diverse cultures) will have constructed differing cognitive structures than many of the adults who work with them.
(3) Teacher education must be based on "opening the minds of future teachers" to multiple value systems and the recognition that development is multidirectional and positively impacted by culture.
(4) Preservice teachers need experiences in creating community cultures (e.g. classrooms) with individuals from diverse backgrounds.

Reconstructionist Teacher Education

Emerging in the 1930's, a social reconstructionist tradition defined schooling and teacher education as critical forces in a movement toward the development of a more just society, empowering citizens from all cultural

groups (Liston & Zeichner, 1990). Examples of this tradition are the New College experiment at Teachers College, Columbia in which preservice teachers were given firsthand experiences working and interacting with people from various communities and the National Teacher Corps, addressing children of poverty.

Recently, critical theorists have focused on the curricular content and methods of traditional schooling, emphasizing the potentially damaging effects on various groups of children. Content and methods of schooling are distinctly value laden, exhibiting points of view that are often held by groups that are dominant and more powerful within society (Adler & Goodman, 1986; Anyon, 1979). The knowledge base and technique of schooling actually represses, discriminates against, and disenfranchises some groups of individuals. This perspective has lead to the development of proposals to eliminate gender inequities (Maher & Rathbone, 1986), inquiry oriented student teaching (Zeichner & Liston, 1987), emancipatory supervision models (Gitlin & Smyth, 1989), and courses designed to develop teachers who critically analyze curriculum within the context of diverse perspectives (Adler & Goodman, 1986). Critical inquiry is implicit within all of these proposals.

Liston and Zeichner (1990) further support this reconstructionist approach by proposing that teacher education students must develop a democratic deliberative character. A democratic way of life necessitates certain expectations for educational goals and curriculum. First, educational goals cannot be repressive or discriminatory for any group. When practices deny potential learning experiences to any student or create an environment in which individuals feel less competent, a repressive or discriminatory education exists. Preservice teachers must examine their social beliefs, determine how these beliefs are related to educational goals and resultant conditions of schooling, and alter beliefs and practices if they are obstacles to education in a democratic society. Liston and Zeichner (1990) have involved students in the examination of social beliefs and conditions of schooling by analyzing race relations using Vivian Gussin Paley's White Teacher, sociolinguistic differences with Shirley Brice Heath's Ways With Words, and the work of John Ogbu (1987) on historical, cultural, and political-economic factors as creators of "opportunity" for various cultural groups.

Social reconstructionists perspectives on teacher education focus on the conditions of schooling within a democracy, either providing opportunities to develop strengths in all people, or serving to create a society that is more discriminatory and more repressive. The foundation for the reconstructionist movement supports the notion that democracy and diversity go hand in hand.

(1) Prospective teachers must analyze their own social beliefs, the beliefs of others in society, and the conditions of schooling within society.

(2) Preservice teachers must develop skills of critical inquiry, focusing on educational goals, content of curriculum, and ethical considerations within a democracy that would empower all

citizens to be respected, happy, and considered equal human beings.

(3) When conditions of schooling are repressive and discriminatory, future teachers must be prepared to alter educational goals and practices to make them consistent with a democracy in all are given opportunities.

Final Recommendations

Preparing teachers for cultural diversity is much more complex than incorporating "multicultural education" into all courses, discussing individual differences, or providing field experiences with diverse populations. The issues are philosophical, social, political, economic and psychological. The philosophy and values of the society must be critically examined. Preservice teachers must construct understandings of the effect of values on reality, the dominant forces in society, the political and economic context within which decisions are made, and the impact of culture on the individual. This can only be accomplished within a teacher education program that is philosophically grounded in these issues. Students in the program would:

(1) Focus on cross-cultural interactions and community involvement;
(2) Construct understandings that are open to multiple realities;
(3) Develop a disposition for exploration, action, and recognition of possibilities;
(4) Examine individual culture and cognitive perspectives;
(5) Function with the recognition that development is multidirectional and positively impacted by culture;
(6) Analyze social beliefs and the impact of beliefs on conditions of schooling; and
(7) Regularly demonstrate:
    (a) skills of critical inquiry,
    (b) skills in creating community cultures with individuals from diverse backgrounds, and
    (c) skills in altering school environments to create conditions that facilitate and empower learners from all cultural groups.

For the democratization of schools to become reality, teacher educators must understand the issues and incorporate this knowledge into the foundation and practice of preparation programs. Otherwise, we will continue to talk; teachers will continue to be ill prepared; and many of the nation's children will be lost.

References

Als, H. (1979). Social interaction: Dynamic matrix for developing behavioral organization. In I. C. Uzgiris (Ed.), Social interaction and communication during infancy. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Adler, S., & Goodman, J. (1986). Critical theory as a foundation for methods courses. Journal of Teacher Education, 37(4), 2-8.

Anyon, J. (1979). Ideology and United States history textbooks. Harvard Educational Review, 49, 361-386.

Apple, M. (1982). Education and power. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Aronowitz, S., & Giroux, H. (1985). Education under seige. South Hadley, MA: Bergin & Garvey.

Banks, J. (1981). Multiethnic education: Theory and practice. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Banks, J. (1991). Teaching strategies for ethnic studies. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Bowles, S., & Gintis, H. (1977). Schooling in capitalist America. New York: Basic Books.

Bowman, B. (1989, October). Educating language-minority children: Challenges and opportunities. Phi Delta Kappan, 118-121.

Boyer, J. (1981). The ethnic literacy aspect of multicultural education: A perspective on the education of teachers. In Rose Duhon, (Ed.,), ATE promises and progress in multicultural education. (pp. 1-10). Lake Charles,LA: McNeese State University.

Brown, T. (1988, February). Multicultural education in classroom instruction. Paper presented at the Association of Teacher Educators Conference, San Diego, CA.

Buttery, T., Habermann, M. & Houston, R. (1990, February). ATE: First annual survey of critical issues in teacher education. Reston, VA: Association of Teacher Educators.

Dilworth, M. (1990, August). Reading between the lines: Teachers and their racial/ethnic cultures. Washington, DC: ERIC Clearinghouse on Teacher Education and American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.

Fosnot, C.T. (1989). Enquiring teachers, enquiring learners: A constructivist approach for teaching. New York: Teachers College Press.

Gitlin, A., & Smyth, J. (1989) A dialogical approach to understanding: Horizontal evaluation. In A. Gitlin & J. Smyth (Eds.), Teacher evaluation: Educative alternatives (pp. 61-76). New York: Falmer Press.

Garcia, R. (1982). Teaching in a pluralistic society. New York: Workman Publishing Company, Inc.

Gollnick, D., & Chinn, P. (1986). Multicultural education in pluralistic society. Columbus: Charles Merrill.

Guba, E.G. (Ed.) (1990). A paradigm dialog. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Guba, E.G., & Lincoln, Y.S. (1989). Fourth generation evaluation. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Hadaway, N., & Florez, V., Larke, P., & Wiseman, D. (1988, February). Multicultural education: What educators know, what they need to know. Paper presentation at the Annual Meeting of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, New Orleans, LA.

Heath, S.B. (1983). Ways with words. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Howe, H. (1991, November). America 2000: A bumpy ride on four trains. Phi Delta Kappa, 192-203.

Kamii, C. (1985). Young children reinvent arithmetic. New York: Teachers College Press.

King, E. (1980). Teaching ethnic awareness. Santa Monica, CA: Goodyear Publishing Company.

Larke, P., Wiseman, D., & Bradley, C. (1990). Cultural diversity awareness inventory: Assessing the sensitivity of preservice teachers. Action in Teacher Education, 12, 23-30.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). Naturalistic inquiry. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Liston, D.P., & Zeichner, K.M. (1990). Teacher education and the social context of schooling: Issues for curriculum development. American Educational Research Journal, 27(4), 610-636.

Maher, F., & Rathbone, C. (1986). Teacher education and feminist theory: Some implications for practice. American Journal of Education, 94, 214-235.

Mitchell, B. (1987). Multicultural education: A second glance at the present American effort. Educational Research Quarterly, 11, 8-12.

Mock, K. (1981, November). Multicultural education in early childhood: A developmental rationale. Paper presented at the National Conference on Multicultural Education, Winnepeg: Canada

Ogbu, J. (1987). Variability in minority school performance: A problem in search of an explanation. Anthropology and Education Quarterly, 18, 312-334.

Olson, D.R. (1976). Culture, technology, and intellect. In L.B. Resnick (Ed.), The nature of intelligence. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Paley, V. G. (1989). White teacher. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Poplin, M. S. (1988). Holistic/constructivist principles of the teaching/learning process: Implications for the field of learning disabilities. Journal of Learning Disabilities, 21(7), 401-416.

Reiff, J., & Cannella, G., (1990). Multicultural beliefs, personal beliefs, and conceptual level of preservice teachers. Paper presented at the Association of Teacher Educators, New Orleans, LA.

Rogoff, B. (1990). Apprenticeship in thinking: Cognitive development in social context. New York: Oxford University Press.

Schribner, S., & Cole, M. (1981). The psychology of literacy. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

21st century: Restructuring the education of teachers. (1991). Reston, VA: Association of Teacher Educators.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wertsch, J. V. (1985). Vygotsky and the social formation of mind. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Zeichner, K.M., & Liston, D.P. (1987). Teaching student teachers to reflect. Harvard Educational Review, 57(1), 1-22.

Table 1

Justifications given by teachers for leaving the profession

	Racial Group	
Justification	Blacks	Whites
Low Salary	75%	73%
Discipline Problems	75%	62%
Burnout	26%	44%

Dilworth, 1990